1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
FE11 Tallensi FE11
Kusase

carry it round. The body is carried by her sons-in-law to the grave, or if she has not any, by her husband's brothers and brothers' sons. When the grave is reached, the body is taken out of the mat; a *baya* (sexton) enters the grave and receives the body which is laid on the left side, facing west. If the husband of my daughter is a rich man, he will kill a goat for my brothers, who, when they have skinned it, may return him a hind leg. This, however, he may refuse to accept, as he may be hoping I will give him another of my daughters. He also gives them fowls and guinea-fowls, one a dead one. On the way back from the funeral custom, they will halt near our town and kill and roast and eat all these but one. This they do, because if they were to bring them home, there would not be so much for them. One guinea-fowl they bring home, also the calabash of water with which the body has been bathed. The guinea-fowl is given to the dead girl's mother and any of my unmarried daughters. The calabash containing the water is buried in the compound farm and this becomes her grave. It is buried by a *baya*. I, her father, will kill a fowl and a guinea-fowl over it. First the heads are knocked against the ground and then I cut their throats saying: "So-and-so (naming the dead woman) take your fowl and guinea-fowl; ask for a way to pass and ask blessings (*malog*) for us". This sacrifice is cooked outside the compound, and every one, even small children, may eat of it. After that no attention is given to the grave; fowls may scratch over it.'

An old woman who has had many children will have the *ku-dar* and *ku-kweem* just as a man, but a young woman will not.

When a man's wife dies, he is not allowed to have intercourse with his other wives until the final obsequies of his wife have been held. 'If he did so, any infant upon whom he looked would die.' The man would have something called *gaba* (exactly the same name and same custom is found among the Nankanse). 'If he were even to look on a calf it would die. I have not had sexual intercourse with any of my wives for over a year', said a widower to me, the final funeral custom of whose wife had not yet been held. When the time for the *ku-kweem* funeral ceremony arrives, the sisters of the dead woman will take one of the three pots used for a hearth, the dead woman's porridge stick, her old broom, a red earthen pot called *kay* (Nankane *kaleya*), her calabash spoon (*bea*), her upper grinding stone (*ni-kan*), and go with all these to the cross-roads. When they arrive there one of the women will raise the shrill *kyeliy* cry of women, and those carrying these things will cast them down. When they return, they

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

613 Seniority (*kpɛmɔt*) is defined by four criteria, singly or in combination
● 561 according to the situation and the group involved. These are age, generation, social maturity, and status. A youth of 18 is always a 'child (*bii*)'; a man of 40 calls himself a 'child' if his father is still alive, but will be counted among the *kpɛm* if he is head of a nuclear lineage. A chief is always a *kpeem* irrespective of his age or generation.

Succession to lineage headship depends on one very important rule.[1] Within the range of recognized generation differences—that is, at the widest the medial lineage—succession goes by generation, not by age. The son begotten by an old man towards the end of his life takes precedence over his much older grandson. Beyond that range succession goes by age. This is summed up in the maxim 'Generation differences do not cross the *dug* (*dɔŋam pu yakɔt dug la*)'. This rule is a source of frequent discord.

613 No doubt because of their equalitarian social system and their seg-
[554] mentary social structure, Tallensi attach exceptional prestige value to the attainment of lineage headship, especially in the higher orders of lineage segmentation. Rival claims to headships of greater than medial lineages are based on varying interpretations of the rule of seniority. Thus Yinyɛla of Tɔŋ-Puhug (see pp. 195–6) claimed seniority by generation over all the other elders of Lebhtiis yir and demanded redress for having been cheated, as he said, of succession to the headship of Puhug thirty-five years or so before. The other elders declared that Puhug had 'spread' genealogically (*ŋŋ yalɔŋa*) so much since the time of Yinyɛla's grandfather that succession by seniority of generation no longer held outside the inner lineage.

In every maximal lineage (or among Mosuor biis, sub-clan) there is a hierarchy of lineage heads corresponding to the hierarchy of segments and the hierarchy of *bɔŋar* shrines. Obviously a particular lineage head may be head of several segments of different orders. Thus Deemzeet (see p. 194) is head of his nuclear lineage, his medial lineage, and of the whole section of Puhug. At the apex stands the head of the maximal lineage or sub-clan whose status practically always carries with it politico-ritual office. This has an important bearing on the working of the lineage system. Every head of a less than maximal lineage stands for his segment, sometimes in opposition to other segments of the lineage. The head of the maximal lineage is raised above the sectional interests of the segments by his politico-ritual office. He is bound by that office to think of himself as representing the whole maximal lineage and its common interests, irrespective of the segment to which he happens to belong. This is symbolized by his having custody of the focal ancestor shrine of the maximal lineage and is sanctioned by the investment of his position with special ritual status. Though only *primus inter pares*, like all lineage heads, he has the added moral and ritual authority of his office, due to his being identified with the founding ancestors.[2]

[1] This rule and its far-reaching implications are fully discussed in the next [648] volume of this study.

[2] This has often misled Administrative officers faced with rival claimants to jurisdiction in certain areas. When a chief or tendaana says of another 'I gave

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

CHAPTER XII

THE FUNCTIONS OF KINSHIP

OUR study has made it clear that the recognition of genealogical relationships in the ordering of social life has an extremely wide range of application among the Tallensi. To be sure, some classes of social relations in which individuals or organized groups normally participate do not necessarily imply cognizance of genealogical connexions. There are the activities of buyers and sellers in the market-place, for example. These are transactions in which kinship may, but for the most part does not, play a critical part. If it comes into the picture it does so as an adventitious factor, not as an intrinsic constitutive element. Even between kinsfolk transactions in the market are ruled by considerations of price, costs, profits, supply, and demand. A man who goes to market to buy a cap will not patronize a kinsman who has caps for sale if he can get one cheaper from a stranger. But it may happen that a seller of caps will be satisfied with a slightly smaller margin of profit if the buyer is his kinsman than if he is a stranger.

Apart from such ephemeral inter-personal relations, there are lasting social ties, such as those of friendship (*zoot*), which do not necessarily presuppose genealogical connexions. It is a common thing for Tallensi, especially for men, to have friends (*zɔ*, pl. *zɔnam*) in other clans than their own, and nowadays in neighbouring tribes. Friends visit one another occasionally, help one another sometimes, and give one another gifts. A man may also have a woman friend (*zɔm*), usually the wife of one of his clansmen. The man takes small gifts to his *zɔm* from time to time and she reciprocates by cooking a meal for him. She may assist him to find a wife from among her clan sisters. But if friends are not necessarily kinsmen, they very often have common kin. In fact friendships between unrelated Tallensi are most often formed through one of the parties visiting a kinsman of the other party and so making his acquaintance. Many friendships arise from contacts at funeral ceremonies or when hoeing or building parties come to help a father- or brother-in-law. In any case, the commonest and most prized form of friendship is friendship with a clansman or a neighbour of a related clan. Many such friendships go back to childhood and are the more highly prized because they are voluntary, personal, and not subject to hard-and-fast rules.

In the same way, though the Tallensi do not have institutionalized age-grades, men or women of about the same degree of social maturity are often grouped together in situations in which many people of all ages play a part. One sees this very clearly on ceremonial occasions. At funeral ceremonies, for example, there is first of all the usual separation

[p. 337]

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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of the spheres of the two sexes. The sphere of the women is within the homestead. There they stay most of the time and there they carry out the duties that fall to them. The sphere of the men is outside, in front of the gateway, in the cattle yard and the *zɔŋ* (cf. p. 53). All the public rites take place outside. But in addition there is a distribution of tasks, duties, and privileges in accordance with a broad stratification by seniority. The oldest people in both spheres are spoken of as the elders (*kpɛm*). They have the seats of honour. For the most part they merely advise, and if hitches arise exercise a somewhat distant supervision over the activities. If they take an active part it is only in the most important of the rites. But they have the highest privileges. When food or meat or beer is distributed it is the elders who receive the portions due to the lineage units they represent and take the largest share of these portions. It is the old women, too, who take the lion's share of the gifts and obligatory contributions of foodstuffs handed over to the womenfolk. The burden of managing the ceremonies, performing the complicated series of rites, and attending to the many practical tasks involved, such as digging the grave, slaughtering sacrificial animals, and preparing food and beer, falls on the men who 'come after the elders (*kpɛm tayalis*)' and their female counterparts. The *kpɛm tayalis* are the men of mature experience but still able-bodied, men in the late forties and early fifties, the corresponding stratum among the women being those who have adolescent children. The young men and women, assisted by the adolescent boys and girls, do the fetching and carrying and give any casual help that may be required. The boys have the privilege of plucking and roasting any fowls that are slaughtered and keep some of the titbits for themselves. The girls surfeit themselves with frequent tasting of porridge and oily bean stew while they are cooking. This pattern can be observed in any collective activity.

Such arrangements, informal products though they are of the pragmatic requirements of the situation, are so stereotyped that they can be called customary. They arise without reference to genealogical connexions. But it is characteristic of Tale social life that they do so in situations whose structure is determined by kinship and clanship institutions. In fact the ideology of kinship is so dominant in Tale society, and the web of genealogical connexions so extensive, that no social relationships or events fall completely outside the orbit of kinship. In this respect the Tallensi resemble very many other primitive societies among whom, as Firth puts it,[1] kinship is the articulating principle of social organization. Just because kinship acts as a major determinant of social behaviour in every aspect and department of social life, it is the basis of the machinery of social integration in societies of this type, as many studies in Africa, Oceania, and America have shown. The result, as we have seen, both in this book and in the first part of our study, is that

[1] Raymond Firth, *We, the Tikopia*, 1936, p. 577.

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

571 861 siblings, half-siblings, and ortho-cousins of close agnatic kinship from the same joint family or sublineage group. The composition of a children's group depends upon various factors. The most important of these are the following:

561 857 *Age and mobility.* Infants still requiring care are often carried about by boys and girls attached to a group of older children. Generally speaking, children of the same degree of mobility tend to go about together. Thus one often finds a group comprising children of about 6 to 10 years. But the stage of social development reached by a child is important in this connexion. Hence young children under 10–11, children between 10–11 and the beginning of pubescence, and adolescents all tend to form separate groups.

571 857 462 *Sex.* Before the age of about 6 years small boys very frequently go about with girls' groups, and small girls, though more rarely, accompany older brothers. After that age as mobility increases and interests diverge the sexes tend to separate. A well-defined sexual dichotomy runs through Tale social life and thought, and the children begin to adopt the cultural definitions of the roles of the sexes in relation to each other about the time that single-sex groups become common. This is associated with a differentiation of their activities on the periphery of the economic system. Thus cowherds are always boys, whereas it is the girls who help with the housekeeping.

571 857 *The social situation.* Yet none of these children's groups resemble gangs. They have no permanent structure. They generally crystallize out in particular situations and the composition of a group depends largely upon the situation. In ritual situations one often finds a somewhat amorphous group of children and young people of a wide age-range. In games and imaginative play, however, it is more usual to meet with small groups of restricted age-range. Pairs and trios of either sex and of nearly the same age, who are almost always siblings or ortho-cousins, often have a more lasting companionship in work and play and provide a nucleus for larger temporary groups, especially in the dry season.

593 861 858 The most fundamental educational relationship of the Tallensi is, however, not that of children to children but of children to parents. It is a complex relationship, as defined in Tale culture, but its principal moments can be readily discerned. On the plane of rational, everyday